

**James Madison to Joseph Jones, November 14,
1780. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO JOSEPH JONES.¹

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, November 14, 1780.

Dear Sir, —I do not learn that any of the States are particularly attentive to prevent the evils arising from certificates and emissions from their own treasury, although they are unquestionably the bane of every salutary arrangement of the public finances. When the estimate for the ensuing year was on the anvil in Congress, I proposed a recommendation to the States to discontinue the use of them, and particularly in providing the specific articles required. It met, however, with so cool a reception, that I did not much urge it. The objection against it was, that the practice was manifestly repugnant to the spirit of the acts of Congress respecting finance; and if these were disregarded, no effect could be expected from any additional recommendations. The letters from General Washington and the Commissary General, for some time past, give a most alarming picture of the state and prospects of the magazines. Applications to the contiguous States on the subject, have been repeated from every quarter, till they seem to have lost all their force. Whether any degree of danger and necessity will rouse them to provide for the winter season now hastening upon us, I am unwilling to decide, because my fears dictate the worst. The inroads of the enemy on the frontier of New York have been most fatal to us in this respect. They have almost totally ruined that fine wheat country, which was able, and from

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the energy of their Government, was most likely, to supply magazines of flour, both to the main army and to the northwestern posts. The settlement of Schoharie, which alone was able to furnish, according to a letter from General Washington, eighty thousand bushels of grain for the public use, has been totally laid in ashes.

I make no apology for inaccuracies and bad writing, because you know the manner in which we are obliged to write for the post, and having been prevented by company from doing anything last night, I am particularly hurried this morning.